

VZCZCXYZ0015
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHMO #2946/01 2771411
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 031411Z OCT 08
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC PRIORITY 5381
INFO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0232
RUEHVI/AMEMBASSY VIENNA 4663
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 5213

UNCLAS MOSCOW 002946

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

USDA FAS FOR OCRA/KUYPERS; ONA/MURPHY
- OSTA/HAMILTON, BEAN
PASS FSIS/HARRIES, DUTROW
PASS APHIS MITCHELL
STATE FOR EUR/RUS, EB/ATP/SINGER
STATE PASS USTR FOR PORTER
BRUSSELS PASS APHIS/FERNANDEZ
VIENNA PASS APHIS/TANAKA

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [EAGR](#) [ETRD](#) [TBIO](#) [WTO](#) [RS](#)
SUBJECT: RUSSIA DELISTS 2 MORE U.S. POULTRY
PLANTS

REF: A) HANSEN/DUTROW EMAIL 10/02/08

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: The Russian Federal Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance Service (VPSS) informed via official letter that it had delisted 2 U.S. poultry facilities after tests results ostensibly revealed the presence of Salmonella. Original scanned copy and courtesy translation were sent to FSIS on October 2 (REF A). An informal embassy translation of the letter follows. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) BEGIN TEXT:
Moscow, October 01, 2008
No. FS-NV-2/9907

To: Dr. William James
Deputy Administrator of the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS)

The Federal Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance Service (VPSS) pays its respect to the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS).

Salmonella was detected during routine monitoring of banned and harmful agent residues in frozen chicken leg quarters exported from the United States to Russia. Laboratory tests confirmed the presence of salmonella which is a violation of the approved veterinary certificate requirements for animal origin products intended for export to the Russian Federation (laboratory test protocols No. 18227(1-3)S of 08/28/2008; No. 18227A (1-3)S of 09/04/2008; No. 19011 (1-3)S of 09/03/2008; and No. 19011A (1-3)S of 09/10/2008).

The product originated from the U.S. facilities P-17500 and P-3 under veterinary certificates RFA-053553 of July 9, 2008 and RFA-031257 of July 16, 2008.

In view of these circumstances, VPSS informs that temporary restrictions will be imposed as of

October 10, 2008, on export of products from facility P-17500 to the Russian Federation. VPSS requests that FSIS undertake a thorough investigation and explain how Salmonella was present in livestock products exported to Russia. Furthermore we ask you to take appropriate measures to avoid exporting products to the Russian Federation that do not meet the approved veterinary certificate requirements. VPSS would appreciate materials related to the results of your investigations.

At the same time, we would like to remind you that in April 2007 (letter No. FS-EN-2/3637 of April 20, 2007), VPSS imposed temporary restrictions on the facility P-3 because of salmonella found in exported product and asked you to take measures to avoid such violations in the future. In July 2007, VPSS experts, together with FSIS officials, carried out a joint inspection of the U.S. poultry facilities.

In October 2007 (letter No. FS-EN-2/10322 of October 16, 2008) P-3 was excluded from the approved list of the exporting facilities by VPSS based on the results of the inspection that revealed violations of the mutually approved criteria, which U.S. meat processing facilities must abide by to export products to Russia.

However, on January 28, 2008, in accordance with the Agreement of November 2006, and based on FSIS guaranties (letter of January 10, 2008), VPSS

again included P-3 to the list of the U.S. facilities approved for export to Russia.

The new cases of salmonella detection in product from P-3 referenced in this letter confirm that FSIS guaranties are groundless regarding compliance of the said facility with the approved veterinary and sanitary requirements, which are required for all facilities exporting meat products to Russia. This was also confirmed during the regular inspection of P-3 by VPSS experts in July-August 2008. Based on the results of the last inspection, P-3 was again removed from the list of poultry meat facilities approved for export to Russia (letter No. FS-NV-2.9061 of September 09, 2008).

Doctor James, accept my assurances in the deepest respect.

Attachment: 12 pages (not included in this telegram)

Deputy Head

N.A. Vlasov

END TEXT.

13. (SBU) COMMENT: As post as repeated several times, VPSS is building a case against FSIS to show that it is incapable of ensuring that U.S. meat and poultry meet Russian veterinary regulations so that trade can be restricted when deemed necessary. Post encourages Washington addresses to seek higher-level intervention to prod Russia into accepting international scientific standards as called for by international governing bodies such as the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and Codex Alimentarius. Russia's current zero-tolerance level for food pathogens, like Salmonella, has no scientific basis and is unrealistically strict when dealing with animal carcasses. END COMMENT.

